(13) As the top is reached, another operation is necessary to cap the peak of the roof. The two layers of grass require, when they meet, something to cap over them. This is done by laying down over the peak a rectangular frame of poles to form the base for the cap. The grass is then heaped up on this bed. It is held down by long rods of dwarf bamboo or miscanthus, forming a rough arch and running lengthwise. These rods with the grass underneath are sewn on to the ridge pole and the surrounding network of poles underneath with heavy twine or rope. Often also sharp sticks are placed cross ways. These are known as kansashi and derive their name from the pin used by Japanese women to fasten up their hair when they wear the traditional headdress. These sticks in fact perform this function; perhaps even better, they can be compared to the long hat pin. A thatched roof so constructed will last a long time, often 5 or 10 years, though it may be changed more often if damaged. Very often if the house has a thatch roof and the sides are made of a weak material, the house, including the roof is bound around with a heavy thick wire, cable or rope to protect it from typhoons. (Fig. 9 for a sketch of the roof). 342 335

The interior of the simple house which we have been describing is finished off in a simple manner with flooring and siding, also of cheap quality.

It may be added, parenthetically, that there are two different methods of laying the tile roof. In the hipped type, the tile slants from the roof to the eaves. The variant is the hipped type with a small gable. Occasionally, on the tile roof, an ornamental lion shaped terra cotta figure is placed for decorative purposes. 342 [532]

Tile is set over a foundation of long rods of small bamboo, dwarf bamboo or mature large size miscanthus. Rice straw is used to tie these rods together and to the frame. Mud, usually found in the yard and often containing considerable clay, is placed over this rod base and the tile is set so that the crests of the two pieces of tile which meet on the bottom are cupped by a tile on top. (Fig. 10).

5

Tools

Carpenters' tools are Japanese imports, although local blacksmiths make tools based on the Japanese design or repair them. The common tools are: 413 [439] [326]

(1) The plane (kanna in Japanese). The plane iron is set in a rectangular block of wood. In working wood, the plane is drawn toward the operator.

(2) A smaller plane

243 by plowing.

There is water on the land when it is dug and harrowed, but it is not flooded. Not all rice land is harrowed. If it is not harrowed, [407] the same result is accomplished by further hoeing. The harrow (magwa in Japanese, maga in Okinawan) is partly a home made tool and looks like a large clumsily constructed rake. Essentially it is a piece of timber with a row of strong spikes. This timber ordinarily is made of pine, but other woods may be used. Twelve nails, spaced at about two [414] inch intervals, are driven into the board. These nails or spikes, [326] about 8 sun (almost 10 inches long), square at the head, and with a sharp point, are made by a blacksmith for about Yen 20 each. The [231] harrow is drawn by cattle; two shafts, with a yoke over the animal's [435] head complete the simple implement. The plow is used in the preparation of the field, but far more commonly, the work is done with a hoe.

In the fall and winter planting of rice, the seedlings remain in the seed bed for about 40 days. In the summer, the period is only 20 days and may be less. The winter shoots are from 7-8 inches long, the summer shoots from 4-7 inches. The length is important, for if the seedlings are too long, losses in transplanting will, according to Hanashiro farmers, increase to almost half. In rare instances, due to adverse conditions, seedlings in the seed bed reach 15-20 inches in length. The losses here are said to be considerable in transplanting.

[462] The hoeing or the plowing and harrowing of a field is almost exclusively done by men. It is tiring, uncomfortable, and heavy work. It is much more common to see women hoeing the dry crop land. But transplanting is done by men, women, and the older children. A handful of seedlings in the bed is pulled out and bound with straw, grass, or a rush. There is a knack in pulling these out. They must be jerked quickly, but dexterously to avoid root damage. The bundle is tossed either into a central place or into the paddy field to be planted, if it is adjoining. In the latter case, the bunches are tossed to various parts of the paddy.

243 804 The seedlings are generally set out in rows. For this purpose, a string with small markers like buttons (shirushi) is used. These are 7 sun (about 8.4 inches) apart. Both the rows and the hills are 7 sun apart. Differences between rows and hills may vary considerably. In these localities, the distances were generally the same. The string is stretched from one end of the row to the other. Each seedling is planted at the interval indicated by the marker on the string. This method of planting is not universal. When there is little time, the seedlings might be scatter planted.

243 804 413 Another method of obtaining the checker-board pattern is by means of a home made hexagonal frame, the waku (literally, a reel or a frame). Each of the six sides is divided into nine squares, 7 sun on the side. The overall length is over six feet. The frame is set along the outside border, or at any desired starting point. When in place, the

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

needs supplementation. Hence, a farmer cannot buy so much as a fisherman. A rice farmer, if he is eligible at all, cannot purchase so much as a sweet potato grower. These stores fill a genuine need. They have alleviated hardship and done much to improve the monotonous pre-war diet. In the villages, they are a concrete reminder of direct American contact. There is not a store in every village, but each village has ready access to one.

The rural blacksmith takes care of the needs of farmers and stonecutters. One such shop in Nagano serves many villages in the Oushichan area. The forge is of simple construction. The air is blown by a sort of box bellows. The operator sits down, as if he were in a row boat, and by pushing and pulling the handle (which has a T-end grip like a hand pump) moves the piston horisontally back and forth. The blacksmith repairs agricultural and stonecutting tools and makes new tools, chiefly hoes and spikes for the harrow.

There are no good inns, restaurants or tea houses in the villages. In Hinatogawa a Japanese inn of rude construction and comfort caters to parties for the entertainment of visitors who have business with local people.

Getting a haircut or a bath may involve going to another village. Like the stores, barbershops are little social centers, especially during bad weather when villagers are not working and take the opportunity to have their hair cut.

2

Mutual Loan Groups

In China and Japan, mutual loan groups have had a long history. In essence, they are groups associated for the purpose of borrowing and lending money, the capital being derived from contributions of the membership. There is an element of chance when members bid against one another or draw lots for a loan.[2]

Each member of a loan group advances an agreed upon share. The total amount is then available as a lump sum to one of them as a borrower. The borrower repays principal and interest in monthly installments. The remaining members advance the same amount each on the following month to another borrower. In this way, there is a continuous cycle of lending

2 They are known variously as mo-ai (Japanese), mu-e (Okinawan) tanomoshi and yûrei (Japanese). Groups organized on a monthly basis are tsukikiyurei or tsukimoai (Japanese), and on an annual basis as nimu-e (Okinawan), ninmo-ai (Japanese). At present there are no annual groups because of uncertainties regarding the future value of money. Now loans are normally for a 10-12 month period.